



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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APR 14 1992

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April 10, 1992

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news digest

92079D

Anglican Encounter in Brazil spurs changes in how church views role of women

Over 600 women and a scattering of men from 46 countries around the world met in Brazil to grapple with the barriers and frustrations women face in church and society today. The Worldwide Anglican Encounter closed in Salvador on April 4 with a call for a new international network to further the concerns expressed so passionately during the six-day meeting.

"The light is shrinking and darkness is growing--but there is another light that is beginning to grow in this darkness, and that light is the church," Bishop Steven Charleston of Alaska said in the opening plenary. "That light is present here today, reflected in every woman at this meeting." He urged participants to "speak the word of liberating hope" and speed the reformation of the church.

"If we are participants in reformation, we cannot return to our homes without renewed resolve to make no peace with oppression of women in our cultures and countries," Prof. Carter Heyward of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, said in the closing session. She said that Anglican women "must give up our efforts to be nice" and take home their anger over how the church has ignored solidarity with women and become "angry, loving agents of reform."

The encounter is the Anglican response to the World Council of Churches-sponsored Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. Despite some resistance to the meeting, Ann Smith, the Episcopal Church's Women in Mission and Ministry director and convener of the event, called it "a historic benchmark, an incredible feat." She predicted that there would be more conferences in the future because "we are now a worldwide network." (Page 7)

92080D

Parish's decision to join missionary diocese may provoke property battle

The decision by the first Episcopal Church parish to join the traditionalist Missionary Diocese of America (MDA) may provoke a legal battle over control of its property, and determine whether the MDA is a part of the Episcopal Church. St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, voted on April 5 to leave the Diocese of Southern Virginia and affiliate with the MDA because of disagreements with the bishop on a variety of theological and liturgical matters, according to the Rev. Leo Combes, rector of St. Luke's

Although Combes contends that the church property is owned by the parish, Southern Virginia Bishop Frank Vest said that legal precedent in the Commonwealth of Virginia would recognize a diocesan claim on the property. "There is no way that they have any kind of claim on the church property," Vest said in an interview. "If they will pursue that legally, we will respond."

Until now the MDA has sought to organize parishes outside of established diocesan structures in the Episcopal Church. Observers have said that it was just a matter of time before the strategy of the MDA collided with Episcopal Church canons. (Page 11)

92081D

Waite quits Anglican Church position to write book; condemns terrorism during U.S. visit

Anglican envoy Terry Waite has resigned his position as the archbishop of Canterbury's secretary for Anglican Communion affairs in order to write a book on his nearly five-year ordeal as a hostage in Lebanon.

During a visit to the Episcopal Church Center in New York, Waite said that his Christian faith had helped him "to work through the experience of suffering and isolation" during his captivity and that he had returned "firmly convinced that what we had done was right. The church behaved with integrity and had seen the issue through," he said.

"In a small way, we had taken on terrorism on the only grounds that it is possible--a spiritual ground," Waite added. And he said that the experience taught that "those who practice terrorism--who maim and kill innocent people--are cowards." (Page 14)

92082D

New bishop of El Salvador is symbol of hope after decade of civil war

The Rev. Martin de Jesus Barahona, a Salvadoran who for the past 14 years has been a parish and mission priest in Panama, was ordained and consecrated bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of El Salvador on March 28.

Barahona's consecration was roundly hailed by members of the diocese because he is the first bishop chosen by El Salvador, because he will be the young diocese's first full-time bishop, and because he is Salvadoran.

Bishop James Ottley of Panama, who has overseen Barahona's work at city and rural congregations in Panama for the past eight years, said that Barahona "has the capacity to be a good pastor to the diocese. He enjoys working with the poor and the needy, and is a good example of what a missionary bishop should be." (Page 16)

92083D

During Browning visit, Salvadorans repeat familiar refrain: Stop military aid

When Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning toured church and humanitarian agencies following the consecration of the new bishop of El Salvador, he was repeatedly urged to take a message back home: The United States must replace military aid with humanitarian assistance.

In a two-hour meeting with representatives of Salvadoran relief agencies, Browning and recently consecrated Bishop Martin Barahona were told that death threats have replaced the bombing and destruction of people's homes and crops; that people are still being killed by hand grenades and land mines; that the armed forces cannot be controlled; and that a night watchman and a town judge were recently murdered.

Browning pledged that he would report the conditions to the National Council of Churches in the United States and that he "would make every effort" to galvanize the Episcopal Church to oppose any appropriations for military aid before the U.S. Congress. (Page 18)

92084D

Consecration of a resident bishop represents new beginning for Diocese of El Salvador

Church workers say that the consecration of a resident bishop who is a Salvadoran will be a turning point in the life of the Episcopal diocese.

Diocesan life was disrupted many times during the 12-year Salvadoran civil war that began in 1980. One of the worst incidents occurred in November 1989 when Salvadoran National Guard troops seized church property and arrested church workers. Many priests continue to endure death threats, despite the promise of peace ushered in by a United Nations-mediated peace accord that was instituted on February 1.

"What we need to do is work to construct peoples' lives anew," Bishop Martin Barahona said after his recent consecration in San Salvador. "We need construction—not reconstruction. We are talking about a new life, a new vision. It will be no good to go back to the way things were before the war," he said. (Page 21)

92085D

Leaders of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue dismiss call by Spong to end discussions

Episcopal and Roman Catholic officials involved in Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States have dismissed a call by Episcopal Bishop John S. Spong of Newark, New Jersey, to end formal dialogue between the two churches.

In an article published in the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spong said that until the Roman Catholics are open to change in their positions on such issues as abortion, birth control, mandatory celibacy, the ordination of women, and homosexuality, he could no longer support ecumenical dialogue. "I am not willing to sacrifice women, divorced people, gay and lesbian people, or theological debate and the eternal search for God's truth upon the altar of seeking institutional or ecumenical unity inside the Christian Church," he said.

From both churches officials involved in ecumenical relations quickly rejected Spong's position. "We are committed to the dialogue for the long haul, despite whatever differences and difficulties there may be," said the Rev. Christopher Agnew, the associate ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Church. "When there are serious differences between churches, that is the very reason for dialogue," he said. (Page 22)

92086D

Gay priest in Canada loses legal battle but may appeal to civil courts

A church tribunal in the Anglican Church of Canada has ruled that the Rev. James Ferry must give up his license as a priest because he disobeyed his bishop's order to end a gay relationship.

A five-member bishop's court ruled that Ferry's "admitted conduct" constituted "contumacy and disrespectful conduct" toward Toronto Bishop Terence Finlay in his administration of diocesan affairs. Following the ruling, Finlay removed Ferry from his parish job and from exercising his duties as a priest. The action prevents Ferry from preaching, officiating at marriages, and celebrating the sacraments.

"The church will never be able to go back to keeping a lid on discussing whether or not people like myself belong," Ferry told reporters after the ruling. His lawyer in the case, Valerie Edwards, criticized the bishop for passing up an opportunity to put an end to discrimination against homosexual clergy in the diocese. She said that her client will now consider filing a complaint to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. (Page 24)

92087D

California parish joins Western Rite Orthodox Church

The rector and nearly half of the members of a parish affiliated with the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) voted on March 29 to leave the Episcopal Church and have formed a new mission in the Western Rite Orthodox Church.

Approximately 40 members of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Concord, California, joined their rector, the Rev. Eric Heers, in the decision to depart the Episcopal Church over theological disagreements.

California Bishop William Swing said that he would begin the process to assist the parish into mission status so that they could have support from the diocesan department of missions in rebuilding the congregation. Since the departing members will not seek to control the church property, an ecumenical food program and St. Michael's preschool, both housed on the property, will be unaffected by the changes, Swing said. (Page 26)

92088D

Carey says society is too preoccupied with sexual matters

In an interview with a British newspaper, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said that Christians and non-Christians are too preoccupied with sexual matters, and not concerned enough with global issues, such as poverty.

Carey told the *Independent* on March 20 that "we ought to be less interested in sexuality and more interested in life.... We do tend to exaggerate the fleshly passions instead of thinking in global terms. And the church is just as guilty as any other section of the community, in thinking sexual sins more significant than other sins."

Carey said that the church should pay more attention to the world's poor. "I actually am very worried about what we are doing with the poor. I'm also worried about the affluence of the West. We may complain about the recession, but we are very, very rich compared to other sections of the world." (Page 27)

92089D

ACC releases statistics on the ordination of women

The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in London has released new statistics on the number of women ordained within the Anglican Communion. According to the statistics compiled by the secretariat of the ACC, there are two women consecrated to the episcopate, 1,342 women ordained to the priesthood, and 1,942 women ordained to the diaconate in the Anglican Communion.

The statistics, released on March 25, 1992, show that of the 34 provinces and member churches, 15 have women ordained as deacons and 14 have women ordained to the priesthood. In some cases, individual dioceses ordain women to these orders, not through legislation of the province.

In addition, six provinces or churches have reported that the question of ordaining women as priests is on the agenda of synods or conventions to be held within the next two years, including England, Australia, Southern Africa, Central Africa, the West Indies, and Scotland. The Church of England will vote on the matter in November. (Page 28)

92079

Anglican Encounter in Brazil spurs changes in how church views role of women

by James Solheim

They came from the far corners of the globe to the steamy 16th-century colonial capital of Brazil to tell their stories and to grapple with the barriers and frustrations women face in the church today.

After six days of prayer and worship, plenaries and workshops, and a deep and profound sense of sharing, they scattered again--but they took with them a renewed hope and a stubborn determination to fight oppression against women wherever they found it, in church or in society.

A whole new international network may emerge from the concerns of the 600 women and a scattering of men who formed the Worldwide Anglican Encounter held in Salvador, Bahia, March 29-April 4. In fact, a caucus of Asian women is proposing that an international organization of Anglican women is needed to further the concerns expressed so passionately at the Brazil meeting.

"There was a strong sense that we started a revolution here," said a woman from Africa. "Not a violent revolution but a radical shift in how the church views the role of women."

'Dance in the middle of darkness'

"The light is shrinking and darkness is growing--but there is another light that is beginning to grow in this darkness, and that light is the church," Bishop Steven Charleston of Alaska said at the opening plenary. "That light is present here today, reflected in every woman at this meeting."

Charleston predicted that, by the middle of the next century, the world would experience a destructive new era of colonialism as a handful of nations fought to protect their privileged way of life and a standard of living based on gluttony. At the same time, the world would experience a "reformation of the Christian church like the world has never seen," led by a church that reflected a broadened cultural base.

The church must "speak the word of liberating hope" and speed the revolution by recognizing, embracing, defending, and celebrating life, grounding "everything we do in the love of Jesus" and learning to "dance in the middle of darkness."

The encounter grew out of a network of Anglican women who attended

the closing meeting of the United Nations Decade of Women in Nairobi in 1985. The women decided that the church was still resisting solidarity with women and would continue to do so until women became agents of change, ready to transform the church. The encounter is the Anglican response to the World Council of Churches (WCC)-sponsored Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women that began in 1988.

That decade is not doing very well, as several speakers acknowledged. Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning said that the decade has "brought about welcome changes in the visibility of women" but that it has not made much difference in the power structures of the church. He said that "many Christian men have a hard time seeing women's issues as their issues," and he suggested that the Decade of Evangelism, also endorsed throughout the Anglican Communion, "has left women's concerns out in the cold, as if they were somehow auxiliary to the 'real' work of the church, as if women's concerns were of interest only to women and not to men."

Aruna Gnadason, director of women's ministries at the WCC, said that "most churches haven't even begun yet" to participate in the decade. The WCC is alarmed enough to organize teams to visit each of the council's 346 member churches to examine their involvement and stimulate participation. She applauded Browning's leadership but reminded participants that the despair of women throughout the world is so intense some are suggesting "an international boycott of the church."

Archbishop Michael Peers of Canada's statement to the encounter expressed his concern "that this decade has not been fully supported and observed by the ecumenical family." Peers said that some progress is being made but that "there is a long journey still ahead if we are to become a truly whole and inclusive community" and that he hoped the encounter would "give a kick-start" to the decade. He added that he looked forward to the "stories of hope, discovery, and renewal" that would emerge from Bahia.

A cry for life

The pain-filled story of a young Korean woman who was one of 200,000 abducted from their villages to serve as prostitutes for the Japanese army during World War II was seared into the memory of participants by keynote speaker Professor Chung Hyung-Kyung of Ewa University in Korea.

The darkened auditorium was filled with the sounds of screaming and weeping women while graphic slides illustrated the story. "Soldiers attacked my body as if I were their enemy the day before their attack on American bases. I was violated by more than 60 soldiers a day," the young woman wrote.

Chung used the story as a metaphor for the continuing violence women experience today and as an introduction for her theme, "Spirituality and Sexuality." The church has never dealt well with sexual issues because of a distorted belief that only things of the spirit are good. This fear of eros, a love of life, produces a conflict that leads to persecution, especially of women and homosexuals.

Professor Carter Heyward of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, picked up the same theme when she offered the image of the "body of bloody, broken women hanging on the cross." She said that "Jesus draws us to the margins--to the poor, the outcast, the despised" and when we take on their pain and suffering "we become one of them and make visible the body of Christ, a sacrament to be shared on behalf of life."

Before that is possible, Heyward contended, "Anglican women must give up our efforts to be nice. We can be compassionate and kind, we can be caring and, at times, gentle--but not nice."

"If we are participants in reformation, we cannot return to our homes without renewed resolve to make no peace with oppression of women in our cultures and countries," Heyward said to loud applause.

"Women are being violated throughout the world--and in the Anglican Communion," Heyward continued. During the Decade of Evangelism the church "has completely disregarded women's well-being and women's concerns," she said, and participants in the encounter should take their anger home and "infuse our participation in the church as angry, loving agents of reform."

The legacy of colonialism and racism

Blending reflections about the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, Bishop Charleston said during a worship service led by indigenous peoples that it was "time to talk about things painful to the heart and spirit that remind us of the tragedy of colonialism and racism."

The incredible pain inflicted during the last five centuries is the result of a mistaken notion that the people of the Americas were heathen. "They didn't know they were meeting a people who had known God in their traditional ways for centuries," said Charleston, a Choctaw from Oklahoma.

"The truth of God in Christ Jesus speaks as clearly to indigenous peoples as anyone else," Charleston continued. "Jesus is an indigenous person. He is all of our people in one person, embodying all indigenous women who have stood firm for centuries for the love and dignity of their people."

Representatives of 20 tribes of indigenous peoples then brought forward

and blended soil, presenting it as a gift to the indigenous peoples of Brazil. "Let the message go forth that the indigenous people of the Americas stand together," Charleston concluded.

Eliane Potiguara, coordinator of a training center for indigenous women in Brazil, told the participants that "Indian communities are so used to the church's paternalism that they do not plan their own actions or initiatives." One of the most passionate and articulate voices at the encounter, Potiguara said that Brazilian Indians had survived colonialism but that the 900 different tribes have been reduced to 180 and that there are only 300,000 Indians in Brazil today; when the conquerors arrived, there were 5 million.

Workshops and worship

Participants at the encounter were divided into 60 small groups for Bible study and reflection--and the bonds formed there broke through barriers of language and culture.

In their evaluations of the encounter, many groups testified to the power of person-to-person dialogues and discussions. Isolation evaporated as stories were shared. "I feel as though I caught a glimpse of the future of the church," a woman from Asia observed. Another soberly admitted that she needed to be more realistic about the obstacles to full participation by women in the church and that would mean a closer examination of the role power played in making decisions.

Although many participants, especially those from North America, were somewhat intrigued by liturgy with a Latin beat, they caught on quickly and were soon dancing in the aisles with everyone else. Many expressed deep appreciation to music coordinator Simei Monteiro, a Methodist professor of liturgy from Sao Paulo. She pulled together a special song book incorporating a broad variety of songs from churches throughout the world.

"Women think more ecumenically; our vision is not just for our church but for society as well," Monteiro said in an interview. "The Anglican Church provided space in this meeting for all the richness of expressions possible--and the music reflects this mosaic."

A worldwide network

Evaluations also expressed appreciation for the presence of youth at the encounter--and urged that they be included in all future church meetings.

About 60 youth participated in the encounter but also took time apart to share their own unique stories. During a special presentation at a plenary, the youth stood along the walls with signs indicating all the issues the church and society were dealing with--and then they plucked members from the audience

to form a chain of concern and compassion.

At a closing press conference, Ann Smith, director of Women in Mission and Ministry for the Episcopal Church and convener of the encounter, said that the meeting was "a beginning, an affirmation that we as Anglican women want to continue in a creative, unified, networking way."

Pointing to the many obstacles faced in planning the meeting--including resistance by many men in power positions in the church--Smith said that the meeting was "a historic benchmark, an incredible feat." She added, "We are saying to the patriarchy that we are the church." While resistance to the liberated role of women in the church will continue, "women--and the men who are their allies--will persist."

Smith predicts that there will be more conferences in the future. "We are now a worldwide network."

(Editors note: Daily releases from the encounter in English, Spanish, and Portuguese are available from the ENS office. Telephone 1-800-334-7626 extension 5385.)

92080

Parish's decision to join missionary diocese may provoke property battle

by Jeffrey Penn

The decision by the first Episcopal Church parish to join the Missionary Diocese of America (MDA) may provoke a legal battle over control of its property, and determine whether the MDA is a part of the Episcopal Church.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, voted on April 5 to leave the Diocese of Southern Virginia and affiliate with the MDA. "We felt obliged to seek alternative episcopal oversight because the beliefs and actions of the bishop and leadership of the diocese...contrast sharply with our understanding of the authority of Scripture and faith commitment to traditional Christianity," said Patricia Sneed, senior warden of St. Luke's, in a press release issued after the vote.

The nongeographic missionary diocese was formed in December 1991 by the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA), which contended that traditionalists in the Episcopal Church needed the MDA to protect them from "persecution" by hostile, liberal bishops.

The Rev. Leo Combes, rector of St. Luke's, said that the parish did not see eye to eye with the bishop on a variety of theological and liturgical matters, including St. Luke's desire to use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. "Our theology and churchmanship suggested that we were a match with MDA," Combes said.

Dispute over resolutions was 'last straw'

According to Combes, members of St. Luke's were particularly angered by an incident prior to the diocesan council--the annual convention of the Diocese of Southern Virginia. A dispute arose when resolutions submitted to the council by St. Luke's were ruled out of order by diocesan officials because they were received after the canonical deadline for submission.

Combes suggested that the content of the resolution--including one that criticized homosexual lifestyles--was the real reason they were not considered. He said that the incident represented "a kind of last straw. Many folks felt like they had been mistreated by the process," he said.

Bishop Frank Vest of Southern Virginia said that the substance of the resolutions from St. Luke's were dealt with in other resolutions that were considered, but "they were not supported by the council."

Following the council meeting, members of St. Luke's sent Vest a letter with a set of grievances outlining conditions for their continued participation in the life of the diocese.

Vest described the letter as a "nonnegotiable set of demands," including some things that were noncanonical in the Episcopal Church. He immediately called a congregational meeting to address their concerns. "I responded to their demands--told them what I could and would do," Vest said. Yet, despite the efforts during the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, Vest said that he had no sense "that we had reached any kind of reconciliation."

Colliding with Episcopal Church canons

The vote by St. Luke's occurred less than three months after traditionalist bishops urged Episcopal parishes to work out any disagreements they have with their bishop and stay within established diocesan structures whenever possible.

Until now the MDA sought to organize parishes outside of established diocesan structures in the Episcopal Church. Observers have said that it was

just a matter of time before the strategy of the MDA collided with Episcopal Church canons.

According to Cedrick Crittenden, assistant to the bishop for the MDA, 13 congregations are affiliated with the MDA, including St. Luke's and a small parish in Canada. Crittenden said that he was not aware of "any negotiations between the MDA and other established Episcopal parishes" at the present time, although "individuals from other established parishes have been in contact."

Combes admitted that he and the wardens had been in conversation with officials at the MDA "for quite a while," prior to the dispute over the diocesan council resolutions and the congregational meeting with Vest.

Crittenden confirmed that retired Bishop Donald Davies, administrator of the MDA, had met with the vestry and congregation at St. Luke's prior to the decision to affiliate with the MDA to "present options for staying with the diocese or joining the MDA." Vest charged that Davies had visited St. Luke's "without my knowledge. I did not learn about Bishop Davies's visit until I read about it in the newspaper," he said.

Unanswered questions about the missionary diocese

The action by St. Luke's may bring into focus unanswered questions about the status of the missionary diocese and the persons affiliated with it.

"We are not leaving the Episcopal Church," Combes said. "Our parish is simply becoming a part of a diocese that reflects better our own faith commitment. We remain members in good standing of the Episcopal Church and certainly of the Anglican Communion."

"The presiding bishop and the archbishop of Canterbury have consistently said that the missionary diocese is not part of the Episcopal Church nor the Anglican Communion," Vest said. He reported that he will seek the advice of his standing committee and diocesan chancellor to map out a strategy for a continued ministry at St. Luke's. "Some of the members may have decided to leave, but St. Luke's Episcopal Church will remain."

Vest suggested that he may send a letter to each member of St. Luke's informing them that their action severs ties with the Episcopal Church. He said that he had taken no action regarding the status of Combes, but that it "appears that Combes has abandoned the communion of the Episcopal Church."

Who owns the church?

All questions about episcopal oversight and membership in the Anglican Communion aside, the decision to affiliate with the MDA raises a very

practical question that could be the most contentious one of all. Who owns the church?

According to the press release issued by St. Luke's, the congregation claims to hold "a clear title to the church property...[having received] its original charter from the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1772, predating both the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Southern Virginia."

"I don't know whether the property will be a problem, but we will not hand over the property--I know that," Combes added.

Vest said that there are "over 100 colonial churches in the dioceses of Southern Virginia, Virginia, and Southwest Virginia. All of them voluntarily became part of the Episcopal Church after the American Revolution." There have been at least three cases in the Commonwealth of Virginia where the people wanted to leave and take property with them "and the courts have always ruled that the trustees of the parish hold property in trust for the diocese as part of the wider Episcopal Church," Vest said.

"There is no way that they have any kind of claim on the church property," Vest added. "If they will pursue that legally, we will respond."

92081

Waite quits Anglican Church position to write book; condemns terrorism during U.S. visit

by Jeffrey Penn

Anglican envoy Terry Waite has resigned his position as the archbishop of Canterbury's secretary for Anglican Communion affairs in order to write a book on his nearly five-year ordeal as a hostage in Lebanon.

Waite has accepted an honorary fellowship at Trinity Hall, Cambridge University, and will spend most of the next year writing a book about his captivity in Beirut, tentatively titled *Taken on Trust*.

"There have been a lot of stories, but this will be mine," Waite told reporters after making his announcement.

It was Waite's role as a special envoy for the Anglican Church that took him to Lebanon in 1987. He was on a mission to negotiate the release of Western hostages when he was taken hostage himself. He was released by his

captors last November.

"One of the things that happened to me in captivity was that I was deepened and strengthened in my convictions," Waite said. "I have no ambition at all to be personally rich," he added. The proceeds from Waite's book are to go towards charity work, and will support his work for justice, reconciliation, and helping the poor.

Waite, who has served with the Anglican Communion for 12 years, announced his resignation following a meeting with Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey at Lambeth Palace, the London office and residence of the archbishop. "He goes with a great deal of affection. We are sad to see him go, but it is absolutely right. He has got to write this book, and he has a wonderful future ahead of him," Carey said.

Faith in Christ kept him alive

During a brief visit to the United States on March 20, Waite told members of the Episcopal Church Center staff in New York City that faith in Christ had kept him alive during his years of captivity in Lebanon.

The experience forced him "back to an inner strength, and support of the fundamental belief that the divine light of Christ would continue to shine," Waite said during the visit. "No matter what happened to the body, the soul would never be captured," he said.

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning welcomed Waite to the Church Center and praised him for "his forthright stance on human rights and dignity. I don't know of anyone who has been prayed for as much as Terry Waite," Browning said.

A towering figure, Waite addressed the audience with a steady and resolute voice, never wavering from his contention that his mission was grounded strictly in humanitarian concerns.

Waite said that he knew he was taking a risk when he returned to Beirut in January 1987 to seek the release of Western hostages. He cited three reasons why his final trip outweighed the risks. "I had seen the families of hostages who have suffered appallingly because they did not know if their relatives died. If there was a slightest chance to find information [on the hostages], then it was worth taking the risk."

In addition, Waite said that it "was a matter of personal pride and the reputation of the church" that he continue in his efforts, following unsubstantiated charges that he had been involved in arms-for-hostages dealings. Waite described those charges as having "pulled the rug from under my feet." There was "no question whatsoever of my dealing in arms," he said.

Finally, Waite said that he had been informed by kidnappers that hostages Terry Anderson and Tom Sutherland were terribly ill and near death. "I wanted to visit them on behalf of the church," he said.

Terrorism as cowardice

Waite said that his Christian faith had helped him "to work through the experience of suffering and isolation," and that he had returned "firmly convinced that what we had done was right. The church behaved with integrity and had seen the issue through," he said.

"In a small way, we had taken on terrorism on the only grounds that it is possible--a spiritual ground," Waite added. And he said that the experience taught that "those who practice terrorism--who maim and kill innocent people--are cowards."

Waite called on the church "to remember those in the Middle East who are suffering, especially the captors, and hostages--the German hostages that are still there," he said. "Pray that peace and reconciliation may come to that part of the world, that the light of Christ may touch those who do not know it."

92082

New bishop of El Salvador is symbol of hope after decade of civil war

by Robert Melville

The war-torn people of El Salvador today have a new bishop to walk among them--and he is one of their own.

Martin de Jesus Barahona, 49, a Salvadoran who for the past 14 years has been a parish and mission priest in Panama, was ordained and consecrated bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of El Salvador on March 28.

Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and six other bishops--four from Latin America--consecrated Barahona before 800 church members and ecumenical friends on a lawn the size of a soccer field behind the Episcopal Church of St. John the Evangelist in San Salvador.

The consecration underscored how entwined is the life of the Episcopal

Church in El Salvador with the life of the small Central American nation. It was held on the same lawn where, in November 1989, more than 400 refugees of the civil war were cared for and fed when government troops burst in and seized 21 church workers.

In his sermon at the ordination, the Rev. Luis Serrano, the former priest-in-charge at St. John the Evangelist and one of the Episcopal Church workers arrested in the December 1989 raid, said that the new bishop's role would be an important symbol for the entire society. "He has the incredible responsibility of being pastor to a flock who for 12 years has suffered a war of innumerable deaths...a flock who for decades has suffered in a war of silence, a war of hunger and injustice, which cries out for the justice of God."

The consecration came as El Salvador began a battle to win the peace, a battle for land reform, for controls on the military and the police, and a search to acquire humanitarian aid. United Nations-mediated peace accords went into effect on February 1, ending the civil war during which 75,000 people were killed and a million more uprooted.

Symbolic of the *esperanza*, or "hope," that was on many people's lips, the consecration took place against a backdrop of cascading purple bougainvillea, a blocks-long wall of dazzling color planted 20 years ago by Claude Horn, a U.S. Department of Agriculture expert and member of St. John's when it was largely a chaplaincy to expatriates.

First Salvadoran bishop

Barahona's consecration was roundly hailed by priests and laypeople, by administrators and acolytes, because he is the first bishop chosen by El Salvador, because he will be the young diocese's first full-time bishop, and perhaps most of all, because he is Salvadoran.

"Your church awaits you, Martin," Serrano said. "Your church expects much of you. You are the key person sent by God to strengthen and expand the church.... God has sent you to provide a church for the Salvadoran who is without faith....."

Josie Beecher, a former missionary with the Episcopal Church who was also detained with Serrano in 1989, said that "in this very critical time it was perhaps serendipitous" that the beginning of the peace process and the consecration came so closely together.

Before the consecration, Barahona vowed, in the words of the Prayer Book examination, to "boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ" and to "enlighten the minds and to stir up the consciences of the people."

Barahona's wife and children joined him briefly before he celebrated the Eucharist and blessed the people.

Amplified guitars accompanied the spirited Central American choirs that united the congregation in song. Traditional El Salvadoran palm dancers, holding 10-foot-long palm fronds tipped with brightly colored paper flowers, danced just before the closing hymn.

Bishop James Ottley of Panama, who has overseen Barahona's work at city and rural congregations in Panama for the past eight years, said that Barahona "has the capacity to be a good pastor to the diocese. He enjoys working with the poor and the needy, and is a good example of what a missionary bishop should be."

Amanda Rivera, one of the diocese's first members and now president of the diocesan council, reported that Salvadoran women raised beets from seed, and sold them--along with tamales and hot soups--to support Barahona's consecration.

--Robert Melville, of the Diocese of Maine, is serving as a Volunteer for Mission in the communication office of the Diocese of Panama.

92083

During Browning visit, Salvadorans repeat familiar refrain: Stop military aid

by Robert Melville

When Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning toured church and humanitarian agencies following the consecration of the new bishop of El Salvador, he was repeatedly urged to take a message back home: The United States must replace military aid with humanitarian assistance.

The coordinator of the National Debate for Peace, Edgar Palacio, a Baptist minister, told Browning that "the United States must stop sending military aid. We must not have war any more. What we need now is humanitarian aid. We need your support of our economy. We need your compassion."

Lutheran Bishop Medardo Gomez said that familiar problems with the armed forces, the need for land reform, and the need for massive financial assistance are critical problems that continue to shackle the country, even now

that United Nations-mediated peace accords are in effect.

"The repression and injustices continue," said Gomez. "The National Guard simply has a new name, and a new function. Real change is needed. The people are disillusioned."

Gomez said that significant agrarian reform is needed because landowners are not complying with the accord or the constitution, which limits the size of individual landownership. "People are desperate to have enough land for their own survival," Gomez said.

The 12-year civil war in El Salvador was fought largely because the "Fourteen Families" of the Salvadoran oligarchy and some 200 newly rich military families controlled 80 percent of the usable land.

Browning pledged that he would report the conditions to the National Council of Churches in the United States and that he "would make every effort" to galvanize the Episcopal Church to oppose any appropriations for military aid before the U.S. Congress.

The government 'is not moving quickly enough'

During a visit with leaders of the Farabundi Marti Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), the organization of rebels who opposed the Salvadoran government during the civil war, Browning and newly consecrated Bishop Martin Barahona of El Salvador heard many concerns that echoed the pleas of the church leaders.

"Their [the FMLN] top leaders were discouraged about the peace process, about the role of the police, and about land reform," Browning reported after the meeting. "They don't feel the government is moving quickly enough."

Browning and Barahona also met briefly with President Alfredo Cristiani and a top government minister, and with U.S. charge d'affaires William J. Dietrich at the fortress-style U.S. embassy.

Browning said that the principal reason for the visit was "for the new bishop to hear about the conditions in the country and to meet the key people." The two bishops learned that killings in El Salvador have not stopped despite the peace accord that went into effect on February 1.

In a two-hour meeting with representatives of Salvadoran relief agencies, Browning and Barahona were told that death threats have replaced the bombing and destruction of people's homes and crops; that people are still being killed by hand grenades and land mines; that the armed forces cannot be controlled; and that a night watchman and a town judge were recently murdered.

Share one another's sufferings

Browning and Barahona spent Sunday at two churches and a housing project in the countryside. At a parish forum following the service at St. Mary the Virgin in San Salvador, Browning was asked about the relations between the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches.

Browning told his young questioner that there were problems between the two churches--primarily concerning the ministry of women and the infallibility of the pope, and that dialogue was needed for reconciliation. He said that relations were more difficult where the Roman Catholic Church is very strong, and that Barahona "has to do his best to make the Roman Catholic bishops his friends as he carries the mission of the church to them."

At the Villa Anglicana housing development in rural Lourdes in the province of La Libertad, Browning walked the dusty street and wished the residents well in their new homes. The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief had given a \$50,000 grant to help build the 26 brick units.

The residents of the project surprised Browning by presenting him with a check for the PB's Fund, which they said was money raised in gratitude for the church's help. Later he told worshippers at St. Raphael Archangel in nearby Quezaltepeque how marvelous the gift was. "To be a Christian we need to share in one another's sufferings and to know of one another's needs," Browning said.

'Stop the military aid'

On the morning of the consecration of Barahona, Browning visited the graves of the six slain Jesuits in the Monsignor Oscar Romero Chapel at the University of Central America.

In the chapel 14 drawings representing the Stations of the Cross hang across the back wall depicting "naked violence" and "expressing the pain and suffering which the Salvadoran people carry as their burden," according of the words in the chapel booklet.

Browning listened as the Episcopal Church's partnership officer for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Rev. Ricardo Potter, translated a poem to the slain martyrs on a memorial tablet. Browning slowly made the sign of the cross as he looked at photographs of the bloody murder scene.

A Jesuit priest stopped by for a moment, and Browning asked what he could do to help. The Jesuit replied, "Stop the military aid from the United States."

92084

Consecration of a resident bishop represents new beginning for Diocese of El Salvador

by Robert Melville

Church workers say that the consecration of a resident bishop who is a Salvadoran will be a turning point in the life of the Episcopal diocese.

The Rt. Rev. Martin Barahona is the seventh bishop to assume responsibility in El Salvador, but the first one to reside in the diocese since Bishop Edward Haynsworth's yearlong stay in 1979.

"The Episcopal Church is not a church unless it has a bishop," said Ana Emilia Gomez, diocesan treasurer in El Salvador. Christian Alberto, a 16-year-old acolyte at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in San Salvador, agreed. "This consecration will unite us and help us to understand the church," he said.

Anglican Church work began in El Salvador in the 1950s with services in the suburban Los Planos home of British diplomat William Chippendale. Oversight was transferred from the Church of England to the Episcopal Church in 1956. A \$100,000 United Thank Offering grant led to the 1968 consecration of a modern and spacious Church of St. John the Evangelist.

The Rev. Jess Petty, priest-in-charge at St. John's from 1963 to 1972, said that disaffected Roman Catholics and people attracted to the social ministry programs quickly changed the church from a largely expatriate congregation into a Salvadoran one. Work soon expanded into the Salvadoran countryside.

Diocesan life was disrupted many times during the 12-year Salvadoran civil war that began in 1980. One of the worst incidents occurred in November 1989 when Salvadoran National Guard troops seized church property and arrested church workers. Many priests continue to endure death threats, despite the promise of peace ushered in by a United Nations-mediated peace accord that was instituted on February 1.

Archdeacon Victoriano Jimeno said that the consecration of Barahona "was a culmination of a long process that began in the 1980s. We have tried three times to elect a bishop. Once there were no candidates; there was always the war; and the devastating 1986 earthquake stopped everything."

New life and a new vision

Barahona was elected bishop on September 7, 1991. In an interview

following his consecration, he said that his first priority "will be to establish a community among the priests and lay leaders. We need that before we go out into the country."

"What we need to do then," Barahona added, "is work to construct peoples' lives anew. We need construction--not reconstruction. We are talking about a new life, a new vision. It will be no good to go back to the way things were before the war," he said.

The Diocese of El Salvador currently has approximately 2,000 communicants in 10 congregations, one bishop, eight priests, one deacon, and unlimited work in interior communities settled by hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

"It is one of the smallest dioceses in the Anglican Communion, but the numbers are not important," said Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning following Barahona's consecration. "Faithfulness to the Gospel is the important thing--and that is what I see here," he said.

92085

Leaders of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue dismiss call by Spong to end discussions

by Jeffrey Penn

Episcopal and Roman Catholic officials involved in Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States have dismissed a call by Episcopal Bishop John S. Spong of Newark, New Jersey, to end formal dialogue between the two churches.

Spong's call was printed in the April issue of the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, a national scholarly journal associated with the University of Virginia. In his article, titled "Roman Catholic-Anglican Ecumenical Union: A Cause I Can No Longer Support," Spong contended that Roman Catholic policies on the ordination of women, homosexuality, abortion, birth control, mandatory celibacy, and papal infallibility are based on "patriarchal and authoritarian prejudices of yesteryear...."

Spong said that until the Roman Catholics are open to change in their positions on these issues, he could no longer support ecumenical dialogue. "I am not willing to sacrifice women, divorced people, gay and lesbian people,

or theological debate and the eternal search for God's truth upon the altar of seeking institutional or ecumenical unity inside the Christian Church," he said.

From both churches officials involved in ecumenical relations quickly rejected Spong's position. "We are committed to the dialogue for the long haul, despite whatever differences and difficulties there may be," said the Rev. Christopher Agnew, the associate ecumenical officer for the Episcopal Church. "When there are serious differences between churches, that is the very reason for dialogue," he wrote.

Do not close the door

"Many of us who have been a part of the official consultations between our two churches find that we have been enriched...by valued Roman Catholic colleagues who have been participants with us in dialogue," said Episcopal Bishop Theodore Eastman of Maryland, the chair of the Episcopal Church's Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations and co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission (ARC/USA). "We would not want to close the door to what the Holy Spirit may do for both churches through these continuing dialogues," he said.

The chairman of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, said that Spong's article had raised issues "of immediate concern to every Christian community."

Weakland admitted that there are differences among churches on such issues as the roles of women and men, abortion, homosexuality, and authority. However, he said that "this clear fact argues not against continuing dialogue, but for it.... I hope the dialogue will continue with full vigor," he said.

A history of confrontation

Spong's letter drew swift and angry reaction from his Roman Catholic counterpart in Newark, Archbishop Theodore McCarrick. In an open letter, McCarrick charged that Spong's article represented an obsessive "hostility against the Catholic Church." McCarrick charged that Spong was making "personal attacks on the Catholic Church by making a parody of our teaching and a caricature of our theology."

"With sadness then, I accept your conclusion that you no longer accept Roman Catholic-Anglican union," McCarrick added. "I am confident that the dialogue will continue, since I truly do not believe that your position reflects the majority of the members of the Episcopal Church."

Spong's article and McCarrick's response is the latest in a string of public confrontations between the two men. In February 1991, 16 members of

ARC/USA publicly rebuked both bishops for strident mutual criticisms. "It is easy to criticize another Christian group for either theological or sociological reasons. Such criticisms, if made irresponsibly in a public forum, set back the cause of Christian unity, demean the other group, and invite similar public response," the members of ARC/USA said.

92086

Gay priest in Canada loses legal battle but may appeal to civil courts

A church tribunal in the Anglican Church of Canada has ruled that the Rev. James Ferry must give up his license as a priest because he disobeyed his bishop's order to end a gay relationship.

In arguments before the tribunal--known as a bishop's court--Bishop Terence Finlay of Toronto contended that Ferry's relationship was contrary to 1979 guidelines adopted by the church's bishops requiring homosexual candidates to promise celibacy in order to be ordained.

The five-member bishop's court agreed with Finlay on two of the four charges against Ferry, ruling that Ferry's "admitted conduct" constituted "contumacy and disrespectful conduct" toward the bishop in his administration of diocesan affairs. However, the court said that charges that Ferry had violated his "oath of canonical obedience" and that his conduct was dishonorable and disorderly had not been proven.

Following the ruling, Finlay removed Ferry from his parish job and from exercising his duties as a priest. The action prevents Ferry from preaching, officiating at marriages, and celebrating the sacraments.

According to the *Toronto Star*, Finlay said that he would consider restoring Ferry's license if Ferry promised to conform to his ordination vows and the discipline of the church. If Ferry is unwilling to adhere to the bishop's demands, Finlay has said that a "career planning package" will be offered.

"The choice is now Mr. Ferry's, and I sincerely hope he will seek to discuss the matter with me soon," Finlay said.

Ferry: 'Faith in institution is shaken'

In response to the ruling Ferry said that he had "committed only one

crime. I have loved another human being deeply and intimately. Anyone who has ever been told by family, friends, or others to stop loving someone because that person is the wrong color or class or race or gender will know how I feel...."

"The church will never be able to go back to keeping a lid on discussing whether or not people like myself belong," Ferry told reporters. "My faith in God and Jesus has not been shaken, but my faith in the institution certainly has," he said.

Ferry's lawyer in the case, Valerie Edwards, criticized the bishop for passing up an opportunity to put an end to discrimination against homosexual clergy in the diocese. She said that her client will now consider filing a complaint to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

"It would be up to Bishop Finlay to prove that his continued discrimination against gay clergy--and in particular the requirement that gay clergy be celibate--constitutes a bona-fide occupational requirement," Edwards said. "It would be both unfortunate and ironic if the true meaning of Christian and Anglican values were to be determined not by a church court, but rather by a civil tribunal," she said.

Anguish for the entire church

In a pastoral letter to all congregations in his diocese, Finlay acknowledged that the trial had caused anguish for the entire church. However, he wrote that the church is the "family of God and in any healthy family there is need for both discipline and loving care." Finlay said that although the recent case had upheld the church's teaching, it had also raised important questions that should cause the church to review and reassess its guidelines.

Archbishop Michael Peers of Canada released a statement affirming Finlay's letter. Peers said that Finlay had shown "sensitivity and care" and had "exercised discipline with wisdom, and at the same time pointed the way forward for healing and reconciliation."

Peers also praised Ferry's "courage during a difficult public ordeal. I know his willingness to appear before a public court was not simply for his own vindication, but to raise up the predicament of all gays and lesbians within the church." Peers said that he hoped Ferry would be seen as "a person who has acted out of a deep commitment to the faith we share as Christians."

"Christians resolve fundamental issues through dialogue and listening, and as well sometimes through conflict," Peers added. "Understanding human sexuality will require patient listening and study by all members of the

church."

Integrity wonders: Are gays and lesbians welcome in the church?

In the United States, Integrity, an organization of gay and lesbians in the Episcopal Church, said that it was disappointed "that the court made its decision on a purely 'legal basis,' but it is even sadder that Bishop Finlay, who could have modified the decision, chose to ignore the pastoral implications of his action."

Integrity asserted that "literally thousands of lesbian and gay Anglicans in Canada and elsewhere...[will] read this as a clear message that, while we are welcome to contribute financially to the church, our contributions to other aspects of the church's corporate life are not welcome."

92087

California parish joins Western Rite Orthodox Church

by Ann Scott

The rector and nearly half of the members of a parish affiliated with the Episcopal Synod of America (ESA) voted on March 29 to leave the Episcopal Church and have formed a new mission in the Western Rite Orthodox Church.

Approximately 40 members of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church in Concord, California, joined their rector, the Rev. Eric Heers, in the decision to depart.

Tensions among members of the parish have simmered since it voted to join the ESA several years ago.

"The surprising turn of event was not that the leadership of St. Michael's departed from the Episcopal Church," said California Bishop William Swing, "but that they did not exit by the Episcopal Synod route into the newly formed nongeographic missionary diocese which...they helped to create."

The small Western Rite Orthodox Church will allow disaffected Episcopalians some latitude in using older Episcopal prayer books, and it opposes the ordination of women.

Swing said that he would begin the process to assist the parish into mission status so that they could have support from the diocesan department of missions in rebuilding the congregation. Since the departing members will not seek to control the church property, an ecumenical food program and St. Michael's preschool, both housed on the property, will be unaffected by the changes, Swing said.

After a meeting with the remaining members of the parish, Swing said that the church is now looking to the future. "They prayed for the people who left--it was quite a moving moment," he said. During the meeting with Swing, the parish voted 55-1 to reverse the congregation's membership in the ESA.

One week after the departure, 87 people attended the Sunday service. "That's one less than the top attendance they had in the past year. It will take time to heal, but St. Michael's is going to be just fine," Swing said.

--Ann Scott is editor of *Pacific Church News*, the newspaper of the Diocese of California.

92088

Carey says society is too preoccupied with sexual matters

In an interview with a British newspaper, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said that Christians and non-Christians are too preoccupied with sexual matters, and not concerned enough with global issues, such as poverty.

Carey told the *Independent* on March 20 that "we ought to be less interested in sexuality and more interested in life.... We do tend to exaggerate the fleshly passions instead of thinking in global terms. And the church is just as guilty as any other section of the community, in thinking sexual sins more significant than other sins."

"People get the idea that most Christians in the church are talking about only two things--homosexuality and women's ordination," Carey added. "But these take up less than 5 percent of my time."

Carey said that the preoccupation in the church over homosexuality was only "one element" of sexuality that could be exaggerated. "Our society has more problems with heterosexuality than homosexuality--for instance, cohabitation, the stability of relationships, faithfulness, unfaithfulness," he

added. "In my experience as a bishop, I have had more to do in wrestling with these issues."

Carey said that the church should pay more attention to the world's poor. "I actually am very worried about what we are doing with the poor. I'm also worried about the affluence of the West. We may complain about the recession, but we are very, very rich compared to other sections of the world."

92089

ACC releases statistics on the ordination of women

The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in London has released new statistics on the number of women ordained within the Anglican Communion. According to the statistics compiled by the secretariat of the ACC, there are two women consecrated to the episcopate, 1,342 women ordained to the priesthood, and 1,942 women ordained to the diaconate in the Anglican Communion.

The statistics, released on March 25, 1992, show that of the 34 provinces and member churches, 15 have women ordained as deacons and 14 have women ordained to the priesthood. In some cases, individual dioceses ordain women to these orders, not through legislation of the province.

In addition, six provinces or churches have reported that the question of ordaining women as priests is on the agenda of synods or conventions to be held within the next two years, including England, Australia, Southern Africa, Central Africa, the West Indies, and Scotland. The Church of England will vote on the matter in November.

PROVINCE/JURISDICTION	DEACONS	PRIESTS
Aotearoa, New Zealand, Polynesia	5	120
Australia	138	10
Brazil	7	5
Burundi	1	2
Canada	164	158
Central Africa	0	0

Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	0	0
England	674	0
Hong Kong/Macao	5	2
Indian Ocean	0	0
Ireland	1	8
Japan	4	0
Jerusalem/Middle East	0	0
Kenya	0	1
Korea	0	0
Melanesia	0	0
Myanmar	0	0
Nigeria	0	0
North India	7	2
Pakistan	0	0
Philippines	5	1
Papua/New Guinea	0	0
Scotland	50	0
Singapore	0	0
South India	0	1
Southern Cone	0	0
Southern Africa	32	0
Sudan	0	0
Tanzania	0	0
Uganda	0	1
United States	788	1031
Wales	50	0
West Indies	0	0
West Africa	0	1
TOTAL:	1942	1342

(Data in boldface type have not been confirmed.)

BISHOPS

United States	1
Aotearoa, New Zealand, Polynesia	1
TOTAL:	2

(Editors note: In the story concerning the ordination of 10 women in Australia [ENS 92068] we mistakenly reported that the Church in Japan was among the provinces that ordain women to the priesthood. Although it has voted to study the matter, there are no women priests in the church in Japan at this point.)



news briefs

92090

Orthodox churches provisionally renew NCC ties

On March 19, eight Eastern Orthodox denominations ended a nine-month hiatus by provisionally renewing their membership in the National Council of Churches (NCC). The Rev. Milton B. Efthimiou, ecumenical officer of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, which represented the Orthodox churches, said that a fundamental condition for membership resumption was that "minority views be always spelled out and publicized clearly." The Orthodox churches suspended their NCC membership last June after reportedly feeling chagrined by the NCC's liberal stances on abortion, homosexuality, and the ordination of women. The Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary of the NCC, praised the Orthodox bishops' decision to return. Campbell called for "a fuller, deeper dialogue within and between our churches [that would] respect and dignify our diversity."

Citing violence, Moi bans political meetings in Kenya

Kenya's democratic movement received a setback as President Daniel arap Moi, citing continuing intertribal violence, banned all political meetings. Moi's decision, coming four months after he allowed the reinstitution of multiparty politics, prompted fear among opposition leaders that a state of emergency would soon be declared. Many Kenyan church leaders and politicians alleged that Moi welcomed the violence as a pretext for silencing opposition voices. Battles between Moi's small Kalenjin tribe and the more populous Luo tribe have recently taken about 60 lives, with the violence centered in the western part of the country. Moi has threatened to curtail press coverage of the clashes.

Prayer money is like flypaper, priest finds

Saying "I don't want to be paid for saying those prayers," an Episcopal priest in Concord, New Hampshire, returned a check for \$101.88 sent to him

for saying the prayers that opened four sessions of the State Senate. The Rev. David Jones, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located across the street from the Senate chamber, insisted that the money could be better used to "alleviate some of the unspeakable suffering being endured" in the state. But Jones has found it less easy to give than to receive. Returning state money in New Hampshire requires approval of the governor and Executive Council, which, though expected, is still pending. Jones nevertheless promises to return any other check he receives for walking across the street to pray.

Conservative Judaism again rejects gay rabbis

The Conservative branch of Judaism turned down a proposal to give homosexuals full equality within the 800-synagogue movement, thereby retaining its prohibition against homosexuals serving as rabbis. The proposal was submitted to the movement's legal committee by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson of Mission Viejo, California, who argued that homosexuality "within the context of a mutually exclusive, committed adult relationship" was consistent with Jewish law. The legal committee said that rabbis could follow their individual consciences as to hiring gays as teachers or youth leaders. Conservative Judaism views the Bible as authoritative but maintains that Jewish law, or *halakha*, can adapt itself to the changing norms of society. At the same time the committee was announcing its decision, the nation's largest gay synagogue, Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, an unaffiliated synagogue in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, voted to hire a lesbian, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, as its spiritual head. Orthodox Judaism also does not permit gay rabbis, but the Reform and Reconstructionist branches of Judaism allow homosexuals to serve as rabbis.

Church of Scotland in precipitous decline

The Church of Scotland, an 800,000-member Reformed denomination, could be a church without a parish in the year 2047, according to Ian Bradley, one of the church's prominent ministers. The denomination is losing members at the rate of 20,000 a year. But Bradley, writing in his book *Marching to the Promised Land*, said that there was a silver lining in the threatening forecast. "It is the irrelevance and uselessness of the church," Bradley claimed, that enable it to offer an alternative to secular values.

Kanuga meeting to set Cape Town agenda

The theme and agenda for next year's historic Anglican meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, will be defined by Anglican leaders when they gather at the Kanuga Conference Center near Hendersonville, North Carolina,

beginning on April 24. The Cape Town assembly, slated for January 1993, will mark the first joint meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) and the primates of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The joint assembly, convening at the midpoint of the Decade of Evangelism, will also embody an act of solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement in the Province of Southern Africa. Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey will be among the Anglican leaders at Kanuga, as the Standing Committees of the Primates of the Anglican Communion and the ACC plan the Cape Town event. Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning and Bishop Robert Johnson of the Diocese of Western North Carolina will welcome the international guests.

Southern Baptist congregation allows same-sex blessing

A Southern Baptist congregation in North Carolina voted to allow its pastor to bless the relationship of two homosexual males. In welcoming the two-to-one vote, the Rev. Mahan Siler, pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, said that biblical passages condemn "promiscuous, exploitative sexual activity" rather than homosexuality as such. In February, the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, anticipating the Raleigh church's vote, began consideration of legislation that would suspend the membership of any church that condoned homosexuality. The current controversy pits the denomination's traditional opposition to homosexuality against its long-standing affirmation of the autonomy of local congregations.

'Protestant Hour' to offer new format

The "Protestant Hour," one of the nation's most popular Christian radio programs since its inception in 1945, will adopt a revised format beginning on May 10. In an effort to widen its listening audience, the program will offer a weekly combination of inspirational messages and music from the Episcopal, United Methodist, Presbyterian (U.S.A.), and Evangelical Lutheran churches, with each denomination having at least one program every month. The new format will include a mix of contemporary music and the more traditional hymns and anthems for which the program is known. Based in Atlanta, the "Protestant Hour" is aired on about 300 stations nationwide.

Dispute stalls hiring of lesbian pastor

A swirl of controversy has stalled the hiring of an openly lesbian pastor at a Presbyterian church in Rochester, New York, as both supporters and opponents promise to pursue the issue to the denomination's highest body. The Rev. Jane Spahr was prevented from beginning work this month as co-pastor of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church when opponents filed a

protest with the Northeast Synod, a regional body, over her selection. The synod will hear the complaint in May, but if the case is taken to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), resolution of the issue could take a year. "We are putting someone in the pulpit, if it's allowed to go on, who practices a lifestyle that the church has called a sin," said the Rev. Ronald P. Sallade, of the Union Presbyterian Church in Scottsville, New York. Others have championed a different interpretation of church rules adopted in the 1970s concerning the role of homosexuals in the church. "I feel being a lesbian is a gift that I bring," Spahr said. "It's one of the many parts of me. We need to make the Gospel real and give people the authority to love who they are."

Religious T-shirt allowed in Florida public school

A Florida school board allowed a fifth grader in Jacksonville to wear a T-shirt to school bearing a Christian message. The school board signed a consent agreement after a lawsuit was filed on the student's behalf. The T-shirt depicted a sketch of a "brain in hell" and an epigram from the Gospel of John.

PEOPLE

Kent D. Fairfield will serve as part-time interim director of the Episcopal Church Foundation's Cornerstone Project until the Very Rev. James C. Fenhagen assumes his role as the project's program coordinator. Fairfield, an organization development specialist and active Episcopal lay person, will work closely with William G. Andersen, the foundation's vice president.

Kyung-Chik Han, a 90-year-old Korean Presbyterian evangelist, is this year's winner of the lucrative Templeton Prize for progress in religion. Han has combined "evangelical, Bible-centered Christianity with a zeal for social services," said Princeton Seminary professor Sang Hyun Lee. The recipient's son, Hewon Han, a North Carolina Presbyterian executive, said that most of the one-million-dollar prize would be used to rebuild churches in North Korea "as soon as it is politically possible." The rest of the reward, Hewon Han said, would aid the Young Nak (Everlasting Joy) Church in Seoul, South Korea, founded by the elder Han in 1945. The church is the largest Presbyterian church in the world, with over 60,000 members. Han will be formally awarded the prize by Prince Philip on May 7 at Buckingham Palace

in London. John Marks Templeton, an American investment banker, established the prize in 1973 to draw attention to the world of religion, an area he felt the Nobel Prize committee has overlooked.

Julie Wortman, formerly staff writer at *Episcopal Life*, has joined the staff of *The Witness* in Detroit as assistant editor.

Daniel Cattau, who was senior news editor of *Episcopal Life* in 1990 and early 1991 before moving to Chicago, is the new religion editor of *The Dallas Morning News*, succeeding Helen Parmley.

Photos available for this issue of ENS:

1. Small groups key to community at Anglican Encounter in Brazil (92079)
2. Korean theologian speaks at Anglican Encounter in Brazil (92079)
3. Worship opens Worldwide Anglican Encounter in Brazil (92079)
4. Anglican envoy Terry Waite visits Church Center (92081)
5. Barahona consecrated new bishop of El Salvador (92082)
6. Browning and Barahona visit PB Fund housing project in El Salvador (92083)

Photos can be purchased for \$25 each by contacting the Episcopal News Service at (800) 334-7626.

Tentative mailing dates for future ENS releases are April 24 and May 12.



news features

92091

Delegation says Middle East is a mixture of hope and despair

by Jeffrey Penn

Seven Episcopalians who have returned from a trip to Israel and the occupied territories are reporting that the political climate there is a mix of optimism and storm clouds threatening on the horizon.

"The fact that the peace talks are happening is reason for optimism," said the Rev. Wallace Frey of Central New York, vice president of the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies, and a member of the delegation. "Yet, the road ahead is littered with significant obstacles. The crunch will come when both sides have to give up something," he said.

The delegation, which included members of the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice, the United Thank Offering (UTO), and the Episcopal Church Center staff, joined Patti Browning, whose visits to the Middle East have helped focus the church's attention on the plight of Palestinians. The March 8-15 trip included visits to Jerusalem, Nazareth, refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, and the towns of Nablus and Ramallah on the West Bank.

Browning noted that a recent Israeli government policy permitting the arrest of West Bank Palestinians who leave their homes after curfew has created conditions not unlike a calm before a storm. "The house arrest has strapped the *intifadeh* movement. With the peace talks in progress, there is a sense of depression among the Palestinians," Browning said.

"The abuse of Palestinians has lessened--but the talks have increased expectations and frustrations because progress is so slow," Browning added. "There is a gap between the rhetoric of patience and the despair in the reality of the Palestinians' situation," she said.

Hardened attitudes

For Frey, whose last trip to the Middle East was in 1982, the recent visit was testimony to a hardening of attitudes in the past decade that is made manifest in the construction of settlements in the occupied territories. "I was far more conscious of the military presence in the territories this time," he said, "and the Israeli settlements have increased dramatically."

"The settlements that Israel is building seem permanent and are located in very strategic places," said Nell Gibson of New York City, a member of the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice. "They [the settlements] are very modern--a stark contrast with the makeshift refugee camps and their galvanized fences," she added.

Gibson said that life in the occupied territories "remind me a great deal of the conditions in South Africa." She added that an encounter with a former Israeli ambassador during the trip contributed to the comparison. "He described Palestinian people as 'others' who have no regard for human life. He sounded like an Afrikaner," she said.

David and Goliath

Gibson said that the current situation had suggested another comparison to her: "There is a sense that the Palestinians have become like David and Israel is like Goliath."

Frey asserted that Israel must "ultimately move to some form of accommodation to sharing land with the Palestinians. I do not see how the government of Israel can continue the strong military presence in the West Bank." He said that the presence felt like "military occupation," and suggested that the policy would ultimately lead Israelis "toward destroying themselves."

"I do not come back feeling anti-Israel or anti-Semitic," Frey said. "I believe in the right of Israel to exist--but also for Palestinians to exist in peace and security."

'Putting their faith on the line'

For Jane Ames, coordinator for the UTO from Long Island, this first trip to the Middle East was eye-opening. "I was awakened to the injustices against the Palestinians," she said. However, she said that the Palestinian children represented a "glimmer of optimism" in an otherwise foreboding situation.

"I can still remember the faces of children who were smiling and singing despite their plight," Ames said. "You could see the face of Christ in these children."

Ames and other members of the delegation said that they were extremely impressed with the work of the Episcopal Church in the places they visited. "The work of the 32 church-related institutions there is amazing," Frey said. "They operate out of a philosophy of helping people in need--regardless of whether they are Christian, Muslim, or Jewish," he added. "People were putting their faith on the line in profound ways."

"Being with Christians in that part of the world is a spiritual journey--you get a sense that the church's witness is much larger than the dynamics of the current political situation," Frey continued.

Renovated church is 'symbol of the possible'

"As a Christian I can't give up hope for peace in the Middle East," Gibson said. In addition to the impasse symbolized by the construction of West Bank settlements, Gibson pointed out that she saw a different construction project there that gave her a sense of hope. "Christians are rebuilding a church in Nazareth," she said. "The Israelis are making the stained glass, the Muslims are working on the interior renovation, and the Christians are contributing to the stone masonry. I think it is a symbol of what is possible," she concluded.



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April 24, 1992

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news digest

92092D

Bishops maintain hope they can radically change style of House of Bishops

The 160 bishops who attended the special meeting of the House of Bishops at Kanuga Conference Center in North Carolina in March returned to their dioceses convinced that they were on the verge of major changes in the way the house goes about its work. "The broad consensus of opinion was that the leadership of the bishops has to be grounded in the spiritual, not the political," Bishop Steven Charleston of Alaska told his diocese.

Bishop John Howe of Central Florida contended that the tension between the consensus model of decision making that is at the core of the changes and the need to honor individual bishops and their consciences will continue. "Living in that tension will not be easy, but it is imperative," Howe wrote in his diocesan column.

Bishop Robert Hargrove, Jr., of Western Louisiana said that the retreat was "life-altering" because it dealt with the "core and critical mass of the Gospel we are compelled to proclaim and how we will lead those entrusted to our care, not into greater disorder and divisiveness, schism and anger, but rather to the mind of Christ." (Page 7)

92093D

Struggle between parish and Diocese of Southern Virginia enters a 'waiting period'

The struggle between members of St. Luke's Church in Richmond, Virginia, who voted on April 5 to affiliate with the nongeographic Missionary Diocese of the Americas (MDA), and leaders in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia has shifted into a waiting period to see who will make the

